The
REPORTER
For Conscience' Sake

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CO Alternatives Presented in Indiana High Schools

On Sunday, January 29, a group of around 60 concerned persons from several denominations and 7 counties around Nappanee, Indiana, met at the Church of the Brethren in that city to "help young men facing the draft to know about the right to claim conscientious objection to military service under the draft law and what the alternative program is so that they may be better equipped to make the right choice."

The increased concern on the part of many, that the military movement into the high schools doesn't adequately present the alternative service position, has led to a number of contacts with the principals and superintendents of neighboring high schools. Their approach has been with the premise that youth have a right to know the full truth about Selective Service law and its provisions. Educators indicated an interest in this, and an experimental presentation was given at Middlebury High School, with Herbert Fisher, co-ordinating chairman of the above named group, presenting the alternative service position and program to a group of twenty-five boys. No attempt at propagandizing was made, rather an honest attempt to present the rights granted under the Constitution and draft act, various classifications, the basis for conscientious objection, how to secure a CO classification, and what a CO does when drafted. This presentation was well received by the youth and when the question was raised as to whether this sort of thing should be repeated, the majority were in favor.

CO Denied Vote in Alabama

Mrs. W. W. (Viola) Lumpkin, 44-year-old Prichard housewife, appealed to Mobile Circuit Court recently from refusal of the County Board of Registrars to register her as a voter because she answered "no" to a question as to whether she would "bear arms" for the United States.

In an appeal prepared by Albert J. Tully, her attorney, Mrs. Lumpkin declared that "by her religious conviction and belief, she is conscientiously opposed to participation in war."

She contended that her right to entertain and hold her religious convictions and beliefs "is a part of that religious liberty and freedom of conscience protected and preserved to your petitioner by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and by Section 3 of the Constitution of the State of Alabama."

She charged that the County Board of Registrars, in refusing to register her as an elector, denied her "the rights and privileges of citizenship" and contravened her "constitutional rights and privileges of freedom in her religious beliefs and conviction."

Following the "arms" question the next question was: "If you answer 'No', give reasons." Her answer to this was:

"By reason of religious beliefs, I am conscientiously opposed to combat service. I will perform any non-combat service required of me."

In her appeal to the circuit court, she expanded her views as follows:

"Though your petitioner cannot, by reason of her religious conviction, bear arms or engage in active military combat, your petitioner further holds and

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TV Programs Deal With CO Matters

The national T.V. program "Crossroads" recently presented a production entitled "Pavement Pastor". With advance press notices that with the frank treatment given to the conscientious objection position taken by Lew Ayres, which was presented on "This Is Your Life", that other programs were encouraged to deal with the same controversial subject, many persons were led to believe that here would be another fair presentation of the CO position.

According to several responsible viewers such was not the case. The plot involved a young man who blamed the government and society as a whole for a life of poverty. When his closest friend was severely injured by the explosion of an inadequate heating stove this feeling became more deep seated. He found solice in religion and the social concerns of Jesus. Because of this he became a minister and started a sidewalk church in the slum area of a large city. When the war came he refused to register, not so much because of his religious dedication, but still rebelling against the government and society which allowed poverty.

Consequently, this young reactionary minister was sent to prison where the warden eventually "straightened him out" by slipping him copies of the newspaper which reported the atrocities committed by the enemy. Finally, this convinced the young preacher that he had made the wrong decision. He enlisted in the army, not as a chaplain, but as a regular soldier. The presentation ends with him back at his sidewalk church.

According to viewers, never once was the CO position truthfully presented. Several persons have expressed their

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TV Story on CO

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opinions to NSBRO that the producers of "Crossroads" should be contacted and encouraged to give a more adequate presentation of the CO position.

TV viewers who saw the program "Omnibus" on Sunday, March 4, got a much better presentation of CO matters. The entire program was a review of the way in which the Constitution is interpreted by the courts. Reference was made to the case of Rosa Schwimmer, a pacifist who was denied citizenship. The program further explained how this decision was later overruled until at present an entirely different position is taken by the Supreme Court in relation to the naturalization of conscientious objectors.

News Briefs

Most military personnel testifying before the House Government Operations sub-committee are opposed to the idea that the Civilian Defense program should be turned over to the military.

According to lower Administration appropriations for draft purposes, Selective Service should call only 175,000 draftees during the year beginning July 1, 1956. This is 20,000 less than Gen. Hershey's estimate of 195,000 men who will have been called by the end of this fiscal year, June 30.

On Feb. 23, four men and a woman, members of the War Resisters League, picketed the French Consulate in New York City for an hour and distributed pamphlets objecting to injustices against COs in France.

GERMAN CHURCH ASKS LEGAL PROTECTION FOR COs

The Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID) has sent another declaration to the East and West German governments calling for legislation to protect conscientious objectors to war or military training.

It is urged that such legislation provide non-combatant duties for objectors or alternative civilian service.

"The horrifying development of modern war technique and an increased responsibility regarding the use of force and war," the Council said, "confront every Christian in Germany with the question of conscience as to whether war may be permissible as a last means of defense and whether he is allowed to participate in a war or its preparations."

Legal recognition of COs has been requested by the EKID since 1950. The Church has urged the Communist East German government to include in the Soviet Zone constitution an article protecting COs. The West German constitution already contains such an article. It states that "no one may be compelled against his conscience to perform war service as a combatant. Details shall be regulated by a federal law."

Drafting of Reserves Unlikely This Year

Despite continued statements from Pentagon officials that they need a compulsory draft to fill the reserve forces, it seems that Congress is unlikely to give that power during this session of Congress. Maxwell Taylor, the Army Chief of Staff, recently stated in regard to the reserve bill passed last August, that "the absence of any compulsory elements" was one of the things "most susceptible to change".

Representative E. P. Brooks, who headed the subcommittee which drew up the reserve bill, said he was opposed to giving the Army authority to draft reservists "until they exhaust other means at their disposal" for raising the necessary men.

CO Denied Vote

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subscribes to the belief that her Christian duty to her Maker and to her fellow men is an obligation of service to the sick, the wounded, the poor and all who may be in need, and hence your petitioner stands ready, willing and able to perform all possible noncombatant service that she may perform or that may be required of her."

The appeal calls for notification of State Solicitor Carl M. Booth to appear as defense counsel for the County Board of Registrars.

The circuit court was asked by Mrs. Lumpkin to order her registration to be effective as of February 1, 1956, when her application was rejected by the County Board of Registrars. February 1 was the last day of the general registration period.

Chairman Walter F. Schaffer stated at the time that it has been the board's policy to require a "yes" answer to the "bear arms" question before granting registration as a voter. He asserted that if a citizen gives a negative answer to this question it is not possible for him to give an affirmative answer to another question as to his willingness to defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Alabama. (Editor's Note: The Supreme Court has ruled that a person may defend the Constitution by means other than bearing arms.)

Mrs. Lumpkin's answers on her questionnaire revealed that she was previously denied registration on January 31, 1955, by the Mobile County Board of Registrars "because of religious beliefs."

Attorney Tully protested to the board after the previous denial but was assured that the registrars would seek a ruling on the matter from the attorney general's department at Montgomery. According to Chairman Schaffer, a request for the ruling was sent to the department after the close of the general registration period last year but no opinion has been forthcoming.

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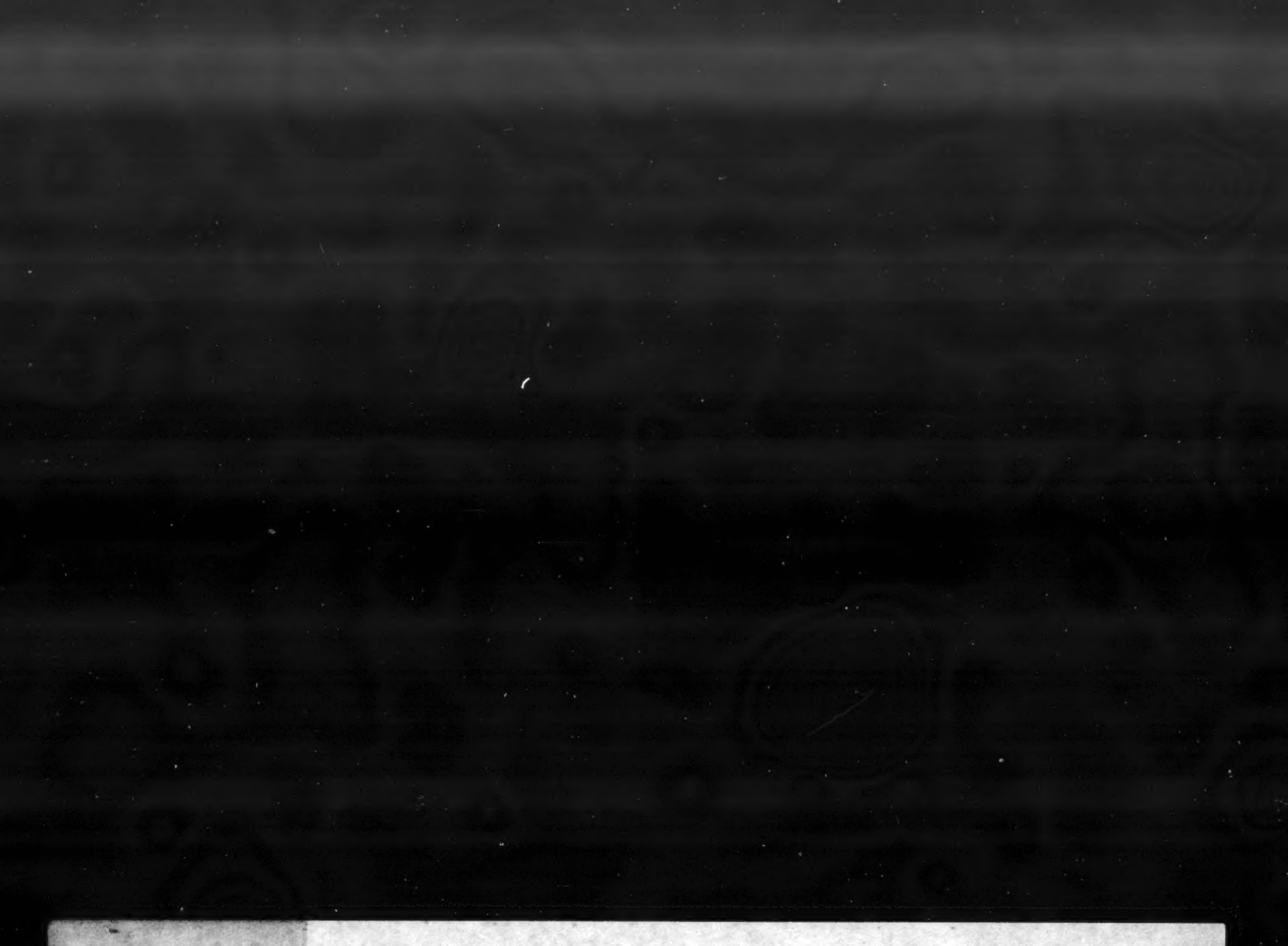
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